(c) whether Government will be able to take a decision on CAS by that time; and

(d) if so, the details of the proposed CAS regulations?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) No Sir. The charges payable by cable subscribers to cable operators and by cable operators to multi system operators/ broadcasters are being regulated by TRAI. The charges have been frozen at the levels of 26.12.2003. To allow for inflation, these charges have been allowed an increase upto 7% with effect from 1.1.2005. These ceilings do not apply to pay channels, which have come after 26.12.2003 or to FTA (Free-to-air) channesl converted to pay after 26.12.2003. However, TRAI has specified that rates of these channels must be similar to the rates of similar channels as on 26.12.2003 and provided on a stand-alone basis either individually or as a part of new separate bouquet. TRAI has specified a reporting requirement in this regard.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), on 1st October, 2004, has furnished its recommendations on issues relating to Broadcasting and distribution of TV channels. The Ministry has sought the views of the State Governments on these recommendations. While no time frame could be indicated for a final decision on these recommendations, efforts are being made to expedite the process.

National Policy for senior citizens

*80. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that India has around 77 million senior citizens (above the age of 60) and out of these, around 61 per cent live below the poverty line or without any pension;

(b) whether it is a fact that his Ministry has a National Policy that promises to help elders to live the last phase of their lives with purpose, dignity and peace; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to implement the policy and to safeguard the lives and properties of the senior citizens?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) As per the Census 2001, India has

76,622,321 senior citizens aged 60 years plus, excluding the population of Mao Maram, Paomata an Purul Sub-divisions of Senapati District of Manipur.

No Survey has been conducted to identity the number of older persons below the poverty line.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The required information is given in the Statement.

Statement

National Policy for Senior Citizens

In pursuance to the National Policy on Older Persons, the Government has set up a National Council for Older Persons (NCOP) under the Chairmanship of Minister (SJ&E) in 1999. The NCOP is broad-based to advise and coordinate with the Government in the formulation and implementation of National Policy and programmes for the welfare of the aged. The Council also works as a nodal point at the national level for redressing the grievances of older persons and to represent their collective opinion to the Government.

Besides, the Ministry has also set up an Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) headed by Secretary (SJ&E) with the sole aim of effective implementation of the National Policy on Older Persons and for taking action on the recommendations of NCOP. The Ministry periodically reviews progress on the implementation of the National Policy on Older Persons through meetings of NCOP and IMC. The last meeting of the IMC was held on 30.11.2004.

Some of the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India concerned with the welfare of senior citizens are extending various facilities/ concessions for the welfare of older persons which are as under:

Financial Security

Income Tax rebate of upto Rs. 20,000 or actual tax whichever is less is allowed to senior citizens who have attained the age of 65 years, thereby exempting annual income upto Rs. 1.53 lakh from income tax.

For Senior Citizens, deduction in respect of medical insurance premia upto Rs. 15,000/- is allowed while calculating the taxable income.

A Special Senior Citizens Savings Scheme with provision of higher interest.

Under the Old Age Pension Scheme, monthly pension is given at variable rates to the destitute old. The number of persons covered under the scheme during 2001-02 was around 54.30 lakh.

Health Security

Medical insurance like Mediclaim Policy is available for senior citizens up to 75 years of age Universal Health Insurance Scheme for senior citizens upto 75 years of age.

Separate queues for older persons in hospitals for registration and cilinical examination.

Evening OPDs for the elderly in some government hospitals.

Development of training module for doctors in the care of the elderly.

Food Security

Antyodaya Scheme: 2 crore families from amongst those with income below the poverty line have been covered under the Targeted Public Distribution System. 35 kg of food grains are provided to each eligible family at a highly subsidized rate. The elderly members of such families benefit from this assistance.

Annapoorna Scheme: 10 kgs. of food grains per person per month is provided free of cost to those senior citizens who remain uncovered under the old age pension scheme.

Concessions in travel

Reservation of two seats for senior citizens in front row of the public buses.

Indian Railways provide 30% fare concession in all trains for senior citizens aged 60 years and above.

50 per cent Senior Citizens discount on air fares subject to certain conditions.

Separate counters for Senior Citizens for purchase/booking/cancellation of tickets.

Other provisions

Cells for redressal of grievances of the elderly in government departments.

Early hearing of court cases involving older persons.

Financial assistance is provided to Non Governmental Organisations for construction and maintenance of old age homes, day care centres and mobile medicare units by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Legal provisions for protection of older persons from physical and emotional abuse and domestic violence.

A rebate of 30% of the tax due on the covered space of such building up to one hundred sq. mtrs. of the covered space has been allowed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in the case of any self-occupied residential building singly owned by a man who is sixty years or more in age.

Under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 every person having sufficient means is required to maintain the parents if they are unable to maintain themselves.

The Ministry has requested all State Governments to frame their State Policy on Older Persons. So far, the State Governments of Karnataka and Goa have already announced their State Policy for Older Persons.

Further as per the directions of this Ministry, the Director Generals of Police of most of the States and Union Territories have issued instructions to their field formations about special attention to be paid for safeguarding the lives and properties of senior citizens.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Dumping of e-waste

301. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Britain is dumping e-waste such as broken computer monitors, TVs, discarded mobile phones etc. every year in India;

(b) if so, the details of the e-waste dumped during the last five years; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to stop this dumping?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) The ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import items, 2004-2009 lays down that imports of hazardous waste into India shall be subject to the provision of Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2003.

Electronic scrap is included under List A and List B of Schedule—3 of the Hazardous Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1989 as amended from time to time. The import of this waste, therefore, requires specfic permission of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. No such permission has been given by the Ministry till date.